



JULY, 1919.

L'UMILE PIANTA

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MISS H. E. WIX, 26, Victoria Street, S.W. 1.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

1914. Adam, M., c/o Mrs. Grantham, West Keal Hall, Spilsby, Lincs. (post).
 1912. Bell, G., c/o Mrs. Wright, Yeldersley Hall, Derby.
 1902. Clendinnen, L. E., c/o Mrs. Howatt, The Grey House, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough (post).
 1912. Curry, V. C., S. Edmund's Vicarage, Hunstanton, Norfolk (home).
 1912. Davidson, C. H. (Mrs. J. V. Shelley), Watermill, Ixworth, near Bury St. Edmunds.
 1913. Gibbs, G. A. (Mrs. Frank Whiskin), 26, Abyssinia Road, E. Yarmouth (will find).
 1913. Gladding, M., c/o Mrs. Prickard, 23, Hyde Park Gate, S.W. 7 (post).
 1914. Kember, G. F., c/o Mrs. Shewell, 20, The Park, Mitcham, Surrey (post).
 1907. Mann, H. C., c/o Mme. Van Kleef, Champ Fleuri Cannes, France (post).
 1912. Maude, W. I., Edward House, 7, Lisson Grove, N.W. 1 (home).
 1902. Moule, M. E., Glen Lynn, S. John's Road, Sevenoaks (sole).
 1914. Ring, H. R. (Mrs. J. H. Clothier), Middle Leigh, Street, Somerset.
 1911. Smith, J. R., Dewsberry House, Pocklington, E. Yorks (home).
 1913. Spelman, E., c/o Mrs. Hood, Midfield, Lasswade, Midlothian (sole).
 1903. Thomson, D. L. (Mrs. Esslemont), 226, Gloucester Terrace, W. 2; and Q.M.A.A.C., 49, Grosvenor Street, W. 1.
 1907. Thorpe, O. (Mrs. Cooper), 20, Clarence Road, Walmer, Kent.
 1914. Whitfield, M.A.H., c/o Mrs. Barlow-Webb, Holmdale, Dorking (post).
 1901. Williams, R. M., c/o Friends' War Victims' Committee, A.P.O., S. 5, B.E.F., France.
 1903. Wix, H. E., 82, Vincent Square, S.W. 1 (home).

MARRIAGES.

OPENSHAW—HAMPSON.—On the 10th of April at St. Paul's, Sandgate, Kent, by the Rev. G. S. Long, Lieut. Hector B. Hampson, M.G.C., only son of Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, of Wykefield, Ambleside, to May, youngest daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Joseph T. Openshaw, of Holcombe, Lancs.

RING—CLOTHIER.—On May 8th, by special licence, at Street, Somerset, Hyacinth Ring to James Henry Clothier.

NOTICES.

This being the Conference number, the less space taken up by notices the better, but your attention is drawn to the following points:—

The *Children's Quarterly* must cease to be, unless more subscribers are forthcoming. The articles in the magazine are all contributed by children, and the subscription is a small one, being only 2s. 6d. a year. Surely every student will urge her children to take the magazine and contribute to it and so save it from extinction. They will find it most interesting reading, whether they contribute to it themselves or not.

It is hoped to start debates in the next number of the PIANTA, subjects for which will be gratefully received by the Editor. A query and confessions column is also being started to which students may contribute anonymously. Owing to lack of space three most interesting papers have had to be held over till next time, greatly to the Editor's grief. The next number of L'UMILE PIANTA will appear on October 15th. All communications, written on one side of the paper only, should reach the Editor (Dewsberry House, Pocklington, E. Yorks) by September 15th.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following snap-shots (2½ in. by 3¼ in.) were taken by Miss M. Gladding (at 23, Hyde Park Gate, S.W. 7) at the Conference, and can be had from her at two for 1½d. plus postage:

1. Nature Walk at Brathay.
2. Bird Walk (watching a dipper).
3. Group (outside classroom) of 1914 students and Miss Millar.
4. Group (outside classroom) of 1913 students.
5. Group (outside classroom) of 1913 and 1912 students.
6. Miss E. Kitching (outside classroom).
7. Misses W. Kitching and Gray (outside classroom).
8. Four present seniors (M. Sykes, Miss Wakefield and two others).
9. Miss Curry outside Scale How Veranda.
10. Some students leaving after the reception.
11. Misses W. Henderson, Moffatt and McFarlane in Scale How Lane.

QUERY.—Do all frogs go through a tadpole stage in the water? If so, how do garden frogs manage when there is no standing water, and not even a water tub?

MISS MASON'S LETTER AT THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

It is very delightful to me to welcome you here once more after the searching days through which we have all passed, and "here" has a peculiarly pleasant meaning this year through the generous thought of our kind friend Mr. Lewis. It seems to me, too, that the occasion is rather a solemn one. No doubt each of you felt that you received your vocation when first you made up your mind to enter the College, and nobly you have, as a body, responded to the call. Everyone of you has good and faithful work to her name; you have been wonderfully loyal, trustful, enthusiastic. You have won a good name for yourselves and the College, so much so that the demand for House of Education Students is immeasurably beyond the supply and many new openings are presenting themselves.

But since you were here last a very great vocation has come to us all. I notice that one of your discussions is to be upon the question of, How to keep up to date. Now the curious thing that has happened to us is that our achievement goes beyond other people's aspirations, so that we are necessarily not only up to date, but in advance. But, you will say, what about the necessary public examinations? Should not our pupils be able to pass these? For the present, no doubt, some final examination is necessary. For girls who do not intend to take up a public career our leaving certificate, which will not be lightly given, is a sufficient assurance. Others must give, say, a term or two at the end of their school course to preparation for the London Matriculation, for example. This is the course we are going to pursue, and we hope that in a couple of terms at the most our new matriculation class will be prepared to pass. We shall probably have such a class at work during each of our terms for the future, and shall be glad to welcome any of your pupils for this final course. Our object in taking this course under our own supervision is to secure that until the age of seventeen the girls shall read steadily in Form V or VI of the P.U.S. The objection is not to public examinations *per se* but to the years of cram in preparation for the last effort precluding intelligent work on broad lines. At the same time children who have not kept up to the P.U.S. standard throughout their course will have little chance of this sort of success at the end.

But this is a digression from the statement that we are not only up to date but in advance, both in reach and achievement. No one disputes the fact, though I believe some school authorities are inclined to think that we obtain our results by unfair means! But you all know the fine integrity with which the school papers are worked. The practising school, as you know, is at some disadvantage because every class changes its teacher every week; but the disadvantage is more apparent than real; the children do good work, thanks to our dear friend, Miss Millar, as you will see

by their last set of examination papers, and every pupil does the right work for her age. But I know very well what strenuous effort on the part of the teachers is necessary to keep a certain level of attainment in every subject, especially in English Grammar, Latin and Mathematics. We know it can be done and done in the allotted time, because there are always people who do it, but these subjects are not popular in the home or with the pupils, so all the more credit is due to the teachers who persevere.

By the good hand of our God upon us, certain secrets as to the nature and behaviour of mind have been discovered to us—(or to me)—which call us to a noble vocation and give us a great rôle in the education of the future. I need not say that there is no credit due to us: it is the usual way of divine Providence to work with the weak things of the earth; and it will only move us to walk softly, to go reverently, if we realize that we are deliberately called to do that which has not hitherto been done in the world; that is, to make education free as air, not in opportunity only, but in possession, to every child of whatever class or environment—a liberal education in the fullest sense of the word.

"Feed my lambs," our Master has said, and we feed them with such food as they consume with delight and grow upon and are glad. Education in this sort is no respecter of persons; the world has had as yet no opportunity of seeing what an educated democracy may bring forth, a realization, we believe, of the angels' prophetic message—"Peace on earth and goodwill towards men."

But I am not at all so well qualified to act as harbinger of these good tidings as are some of your own body. There was a man sent from God, sent with a purpose, and the two apostles whom we send forth surely have a divine mission, so persuasive are they and such new life do they carry with them, new hopes, new joys, new prospects, and perennial happiness. You know about these things in your own schoolrooms, each of which is La Giocosa. We have known of this new joy in the kingdom of knowledge and have led happy children into its precincts for as long as some of you have lived. But principles of education are only valid when their application is universal. Now the teachers and parents of children of the educated classes (the very term is a condemnation) naturally believe in those blessed words, heredity and environment. The children took to knowledge it was supposed as ducks to the water, because it was in them by descent and habit, and nobody thought of saying, "Yes, but children under the same conditions otherwise do not find knowledge delightful unless they are under this particular teaching."

I sat down under this disability (to reach the children of the people), and knew that we were effecting little until we could test our principles on the children of "everyman"; and then, as you know, Mrs. Steinthal came to the rescue. She believed in P.U.S. utterly; she was urgent about Elementary Schools; brought up the very sympathetic inspector of the West Riding to talk the matter over; called a meeting of elementary teachers at her house in Ilkey which Miss Drury addressed, and—the end was—our

pioneer school at Drighlington. Notwithstanding the doubts and hesitations which attended the first plunge, the children did wonders. What one school could do all schools could do and at our last reckoning we had 10,000 children working our programmes individually in elementary schools. That was a year ago, since which we have grown continuously. These children do not cover nearly all the subjects that you take up, but what they undertake they do in a way which would delight you. Think of the magnanimous, dutiful, public-spirited citizens we are preparing for the future! Am I not right in saying that we are called to a great vocation? But in a vocation numbers do not count, there is no human measure for the work done in many a home schoolroom with a single child. Just at this moment a particularly able member of your body has preferred work with one rather "backward" child when many opportunities offered; I suppose that child is her vocation. You have two capacities to fill, as individuals, and as members of a body; because each of you has to bear on her dear shoulders both the Union and the P.U.S.! I may be wrong, but it seems to me that the duty which this responsibility entails is not so much that of criticizing and amending as of fulfilling and illustrating. However, I leave that matter to you. Criticisms are valuable, and we owe a great deal to those which have reached us from time to time from one or another of you. I rather dislike the idea of a little cabal among you meeting with the express purpose of criticism, but, on the one hand, that may be a matter of personal idiosyncrasy on my part, and on the other, it is quite likely that you see with me eye to eye in this matter. In either case we can all pray that we may be enabled as a body to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One thing I should like to urge upon you—that we are engaged in a *reform* movement, and such a movement is like a ship at sea, it must be under one Captain. When I am no longer here, the rule of the one Captain must still prevail to secure the sort of homogeneity which we all perceive in the work of the P.U.S. We have a tremendous task before us. If we think we know things that should help to make good citizens, why we must spread the light which we have, and must also keep our own lantern bright so that each one of us in her place may illustrate to the full what the P.U.S. means.

I know that these are uneasy times. One of your number has sent in the sort of criticism that is really helpful; she invites "some discussion on our future position with regard to the Education Act. It seems to me that we, especially those of us who have got schools and classes, will need to know how we shall stand in the future when such great changes are about." This is a most legitimate cause of uneasiness, and I think fully accounts for various questions that have been raised. In Section 28 of the Education Act we read, "The Board of Education must be furnished by July 1st with the name, address, and a short description of every school of which hitherto the State has had no cognizance." That is sufficiently intimidating, is it not? But I think I may venture to offer you a side-light which is cheering. An ally and

fellow-worker of ours, whom I may not name, had occasion to see a rather great man at the Board of Education and adds, "He surprised me by saying that he wanted to ask me some questions about our P.N.E.U. schools. The really interesting and important point is that he is very anxious to see the method taken up in the lower forms of the Secondary Schools, and wanted to know if I could do anything. I told him that I thought not at the moment unless, perhaps, indirectly, and I said that if he wished to see it done he might get his inspectors to do a little missionary work." I venture to quote this passage, without names, because I think it will be really cheering for you. The fact is, that the Board of Education is dissatisfied with methods which spend their force on the few head boys or girls who are going in for a public examination, and they wish to secure that the "lower forms," that is, boys and girls under fifteen, should do work which they know is efficacious. We are not satisfied with this degree of scope, because we think that the reading in Forms V and VI is a quite invaluable asset; so in the practising school we propose to compromise by going on with the usual P.U.S. work until the girls are in their eighteenth year, that is, have turned 17; then we receive them into a matriculation class for one or two *terms* as may be found necessary. We shall be able to let you know later if the P.U.S., even under the disadvantage of a weekly change of teachers, qualifies girls for this course, and in the meantime you will be able to see their examination papers for last term. Education is the handmaid of religion and we may not make it an affair of the market, but at the same time we must not reach less than the common market standard in any one respect. We remember the fate of the men who laid irreverent hands upon the ark, and we, an insignificant body of by no means important people, are permitted to bear the ark of promise into the future.

House of Education students have great advantages in P.U.S. work, so much so that, though other governesses turn out capital sets of examination papers, I always feel regretfully that you only are qualified to give the rich full life, out-of-door and in, which is due to children. But is it not just possible that you have the faults of your qualities? Other people do just as they are requested because I suppose they feel they must walk warily in *terra incognita*, and the results are often admirable. But you, beloved people, have, as the Americans say, "been there." Not a few of you have brilliant powers which you are anxious to spend freely on your pupils, and it is a serious act of self-abnegation to allow the man in the book to say his say without interruption and as much as possible without elucidation. What are we for then? says the teacher who is conscious of natural power and trained performance. Well, you are even more than you think you are. You are persons of such extraordinary weight that a single interjectional remark of yours may go with your pupil to the end of his days. Let the book have full scope, do not bolster it with other books, let a lesson mean work from the children, and not talk from the teacher, and you will get results which are to be

judged of at every stage by their scrupulous accuracy, accuracy in speaking, in writing, in composition, in the statement of facts. Knowledge will take care of itself, but it rests with us to insist upon accuracy; and if this is true of general subjects it is more especially true of language and mathematics. You will say that we give much less time to mathematics than does the ordinary school; that is partly because every subject that we take plays such an important part in education that it is difficult to know what to leave out; but also it is because your children are in the habit of working with complete attention and therefore of doing double the usual work in a given time. I think this is as true of mathematics as of anything else, if I may judge by the close attention paid during criticism lessons in this subject. But the programme is not compulsory. If any mistress desire to gain more time for mathematics by leaving out some other subject it is within her power to do so; I think though the children would suffer, and I should advise her to gain the same end by securing concentrated and accurate work in the time set. It distresses me that more of your pupils do not take Latin; I know that parents are slack about this subject for their girls, and have a right and natural desire that home education should be in touch with life. They greatly prize their children's knowledge of history, of literature, of the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, of the hundred and one subjects we take in the school; but there are some subjects to which no immediate interest attaches. You can talk about Frederick Barbarossa or about falling stars but not easily about logarithms or the uses of the Dative. The powers that be are beginning to understand that this question of interest is a legitimate one. Children should learn what interests us all and should not labour to develop "faculties" which do not exist. The mind does all that sort of work for itself. Our point should be not to convince parents that a mathematical or linguistic grind is valuable to children, but that Latin also is very interesting, that the girl or boy who never gets beyond one book of "Cæsar" has avenues of interest and pleasure opened that would have been shut to him without that one book. In a word, all our education must be living education.

I cannot tell you how much pleasure I take in your gift of introducing and interpreting nature to your pupils. Such peculiar intimacy and such dear delight in birds, flowers, mosses and lichens, fossils and landscape, is not, I think, to be found elsewhere, and I am grateful to the members of the College staff who gave to most of you those happy introductions which you have so generously improved. It is a little appalling when a mother writes for a student who is able to teach her children "bird-nesting," but what the dear lady really wanted was that her children should know birds!

I should like to thank those of you who have shared their precious gift of nature knowledge with children in elementary schools; it is blessed to receive and more blessed to give, and the delightful give and take that goes on between you and Miss Drury

and Miss Kitching, for example, brightens many a laborious day at Scale How.

I should like, too, to give a word of specially grateful thanks to perhaps a dozen old students who have done definite and valuable work in our elementary school campaign. Some have succeeded in definitely starting schools; some have done immense work in organizing campaigns; some have interested school inspectors and local authorities; some have not only started schools, but are nursing mothers to those schools and carry them delightfully over all their difficulties. In fact, these representative people, a score or so perhaps rather than a dozen, give us the happy feeling that in you we have an organizing centre in an immense number of neighbourhoods; for what one has done everyone is I know ready to do should circumstances allow. And one thing everybody does, she interests her "poster" and "postess" so deeply that there is a widespread sense of our national importance in the cause of education. It is not easy to pick out a few names where so much really splendid work has been done, but I should like to mention Miss Brownell, Miss East and Miss Butler, Miss Strachan, the two Miss Frosts, Miss Moffatt, Miss J. R. Smith, Miss Eleanor Smith, Miss Gertrude Bell, Miss de Putron, Miss Beatrice Goode and Miss Couchman, Miss Kinnear, and Miss Panter, who deserve special mention for invaluable service to our cause. Some of you, too, write quite charming papers for the *Parents' Review*. We all remember with gratitude Mrs. Brittlebank's, Miss Edith Frost's and Miss Allen's Art papers which have been greatly appreciated by outsiders. Dear Miss King, whose illness we all regret, gave us those spontaneous geology papers; Miss Sophie Smyth and Miss Owen will be remembered for their very delightful nature papers; Miss Pennethorne has many papers to her name, as have others whom I cannot at the moment recall, even with Miss Kitching's help; and what charming "Baby" papers we have had from some of you who are mothers, notably Mrs. Hughes-Jones and Mrs. Pyper. The Portfolio offers us another list of invaluable helpers—Miss Gore, Miss Loveday and Miss Allen (again!) Time fails me to tell of other helpers among you who have won the gratitude of all of us, for example, the successive editors of L'UMILE PIANTA and of the *Children's Quarterly* and more especially the dear and faithful Secretary of your Association and Miss Young, her always ready helper. We must not forget either, our fellow helpers in India who have beaten up members, addressed meetings and held up a standard of work to wistful mothers in India; we call to mind especially Mrs. Tasker, Miss Bruce Low, Miss Loveday and Miss Rhode; we at home do not forget these and others stationed at the outposts of empire. Then, there is the fine public-spirited work which some of you have done as Scout Captains, notably Mrs. Tasker and Miss Curry. There are others whose good works I do not remember at the moment, but I must say a word of the real service which Miss Bernau has done to the cause of education in editing and seeing through the press Mrs. W. Epps' book about the British

Museum, and in adding to it her own most inspiring and educative *Book of Centuries*. This is a very valuable asset, and I hope Miss Parish will show you some books done by the children of an L.C.C. school which afford both delight and impulse. But how incomplete would be any attempt to record the work of students without mentioning the labours of a lady whom we may not in the circumstances name, but whose P.U.S. propaganda, in which Miss Wix joined later with perhaps equal success, is amongst the most successful and delightful with which any reform movement could be blessed. I may not venture to say a word about the personal qualities which make each of these ladies a *persona grata* wherever she goes. You must get the tale from themselves, and also get from Miss Wix some account of her very important Sunday School campaign.

Truly you who belong to the House of Education are citizens of no mean city. Freely you have received and most liberally have you given. And the secret of this fine roll of work and workers is, I think, your loyalty to your old College. Pass it on, keep us bound together with one heart and one purpose; make it known to every new student in the future that she is entering on a heart service to which she must give herself up with full faith; that there cannot be affection and disaffection, the two will not go together; that, seeing that we do not live always in the kingdom of heaven, there are sure to be small matters for criticism, but that for her own sake she had better not let her attention or her talk dwell upon these; for loyalty is the hall-mark of character, and while we live in this world we must needs give our loyalty in generous excess of the deserts of that to which we are loyal.

You have held up our hands in the past; never has a student failed to do the thing she has been asked to do for the common good. You have sent us your sisters and your pupils to be trained; in fact your zeal and your enthusiasm keep the College going; and believe me this fine loyalty of yours is, if not the white flower of a blameless life, at any rate as fair a decoration as is given to any of us to bear.

I am afraid I have written you a very long letter, but how long I should have made it if I had said all there is to be said!

So wishing you a very happy Conference, very happy hours up here in this beautiful school which Mr. Lewis has been kind enough to put at your disposal, happy hours at Scale How, gay and happy hours in the open, and enrichment for the days to come,

I remain, your always loving and grateful friend,

CHARLOTTE MASON.

P.S.—One of your number, Mrs. Brittlebank, wrote to me some time ago offering a very important suggestion and one which is supported by Old Girls in the school. Both students and old pupils seem to think that a regulated course of reading such as that offered in programme VI, only with more modern books also, would be of use. Our kind friend Mrs. Franklin and I were talking the matter over the other day and sketching a scheme which I hope you will hear more of later.

LETTERS.

Scale How,
May, 1919.

DEAR EX-STUDENTS,

As we go about the quiet and pleasant work of the Summer term we can hardly believe that only a fortnight ago we were in the middle of Conference week. Scale How felt strangely empty after you had all gone, but the place soon turned its thoughts from your departure to the time (two years hence?) when it will greet you all again.

The weather promises us some happy "long halves." We hope to go and see for ourselves some of the places which Dr. Hough showed us with his lantern slides one evening last term. By means of a lantern he introduced us to some beautiful places which we dare not hope to go and see from Scale How, but to others which we ought to, we can and we will visit before we leave. He gave us a most enjoyable and even exciting evening, for he had arranged a competition in which we named the places as he showed them to us on the screen. The people who recognized most photographs were presented with prizes—pictures of lakeland scenes.

We had some interesting criticism lessons last term. At one of them, in reply to a criticism which said that the class did not seem to do enough work (it was a history lesson), Miss Mason asked which of the critics could narrate the lesson which had been given with all dates, names, etc. No one volunteered.

Miss Mason showed us that the clear narration of things read or heard is the true work of the mind. We must not think that because this work is done easily and invisibly that it is not true work. "Prove that it is real work by doing it yourselves. It is not the question which Miss Jones asks Mary Robinson that makes Mary work, but the question which Mary Robinson asks Mary Robinson." Miss Mason said that we must all be Mary Robinsons! The best work is not visible, does not employ the reasoning here, the imagination there. It employs the whole mind, for the mind is a whole, not a parcel of faculties. Narration is such work, and we must not think that because all seems to go easily and that no effort is being put forth, the mind is not hard at work. It is, and in such a way that knowledge will infallibly result.

It is so easy to forget that narration is hard work. At another crit. we were again reminded of it by the class (IIa) becoming very weary. Miss Mason pointed out that all labour is profitable until the body is tired, and that though the spirit never tires the brain does readily. We were warned that for this reason a lesson should never outlive its allotted time. Though the interest of the class were as keen as at the beginning of the lesson, we must not go on beyond the time, and if we notice signs of weariness before the end of a lesson it is best to stop and go to something else.

After a geography lesson to Class IV, we realized that in the